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|  | INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL | |
| | Chapter 4: Assessment | Effective Date: July 1, 2012 |
| | Section 36: Linking Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) Reports to Open Assessments | Version: 2 |

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| POLICY |
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When appropriate, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will electronically link a new [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114\)](#) to assessments that have been:

1. Open 30 days or less;
2. Involve the same perpetrator **and** the same victim; and
3. The same or similar allegations.

When a CA/N intake report is linked to an existing assessment, a separate assessment will not be conducted, although appropriate steps will be taken within the current assessment to assure the safety and well-being of the child.

DCS will not link CA/N Intake Reports to existing assessments when it is necessary to conduct a separate, thorough assessment in order to assure the safety and well-being of a child.

Code References

[IC 31-33-7-4: Written Reports](#)

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| PROCEDURE |
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Upon receiving a report of CA/N that involves a family for which there is an open assessment, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Check the Indiana Child Welfare Information System to see if the assessment has been open 30 days or less and the new report involves the same alleged perpetrator, same victim, and same or similar allegations;
2. Carefully review the information on the linked CA/N intake report and give the utmost consideration to the safety and well-being of the alleged child victim. Seek supervisory input as necessary to determine appropriate actions;
3. Make a recommendation as to whether it is in the best interest of the alleged child victim's safety and well-being to link the new report with the open assessment; and
4. Take all appropriate actions, which could include, but are not limited to, contacting the family to discuss the new information and conducting a new [Safety Assessment](#) and/or [Risk Assessment](#).

The Supervisor will:

1. Make a final decision about whether the report will be linked;

2. Follow the appropriate steps to link the intake report to the open assessment if the report **will** be linked, and if a CA/N Intake Report has already been created in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System; and
3. Confirm receipt of the linked report by the FCM assigned to the assessment. Ideally, this will be done by making direct contact with the FCM either in-person or via phone.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

When it is Appropriate to Link a New CA/N Report

A new CA/N report may be linked when it is not necessary to conduct a separate, thorough assessment (including all required interviews) to assure the safety and well-being of the child. Example: DCS receives a new report of a “dirty house.” The family has been involved for the past 20 days in an assessment for similar allegations. All interviews have been completed by the FCM, as well as a home visit, [Initial Safety Assessment](#), [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) (if applicable), and [Indiana Caregiver Strength and Needs Assessment](#). Rather than start over with a new assessment and re-do all interviews, etc., the FCM and his or her Supervisor should discuss the specifics of the situation as they relate to the safety of the child. It may be determined that the most appropriate action would be for the FCM to speak with the parents, make face-to-face contact with the child, and visit the home to assess the environment. It may not be necessary to interview anyone else. When used appropriately, linking can avoid duplication of effort. However, linking should never occur at the expense of child safety and well-being. When in doubt, do not link.

[NEW] Linking an assessment to an already open assessment may eliminate the ability to automatically generate each [Report of Assessment or Investigation](#) in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System. If more than one report is received by DCS from the agencies listed in policy [4.21 Report of Assessment or Investigation](#), it is the responsibility of the FCM to generate a Report of Assessment or Investigation for each professional report source and include the statutorily required information outlined in this policy.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114\)](#) – Available in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System
2. **[NEW]** [Report of Assessment or Investigation](#) — Available in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System

RELATED INFORMATION

Collateral Contacts

The above policy does not apply to collateral contacts who call DCS with additional information about an open assessment.